

# Evening Telegraph

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1869.]

## VICTOR HUGO'S IDEAL EUROPEAN REPUBLIC.

The full text of the letter of Victor Hugo to the European Peace Congress, which we published yesterday, deserves an attentive perusal on this side of the Atlantic as well as in the Old World. The reforms he advocates and the blessings he hopes for at some indefinite future period are already substantially established on this continent. His first aspiration is for the creation of a European Federal republic, to be called the United States of Europe. This form of government has been so firmly cemented here by the late war that no conceivable contingency can destroy it. However parties may differ, none dare assail the Union; and while the utmost freedom of opinion prevails, it is understood on all sides that hereafter the utterance of secession sentiments will be the sure precursor of political death.

Hugo's next aspiration is for liberty, which he defines to be the first want and the first duty of man. Here universal freedom now prevails. The abolition of slavery has been followed by the establishment of a cordon of free States in every portion of the republic, and the baneful influence which formerly tainted the political action of nearly half the nation has been destroyed forever.

"Frontiers" are said to be the moving cause of war, discord, and misery in Europe. Here we have an ocean-bound Republic, subjected to scarcely perceptible inconvenience from the comparatively unimportant contiguous territory to the north and southwest. The lines established during the war by hostile armies foreshadowed the terrible obstacles to free intercourse from which we have happily been rescued forever, but which continue to hamper and impoverish the people of Europe.

From frontiers spring large standing armies, and from standing armies, gigantic wars. Here the immense cohorts which but a few years ago made this country the scene of terrific warfare have already gone through the process which Hugo happily styles "the reabsorption of the soldier in the citizen." The soil which lately trembled beneath the tread of a million of armed men has now not as many common soldiers in the field as it had officers at the close of the war, and their duty consists mainly in garrisoning forts or battling against savage foes who are rapidly disappearing from the face of the earth.

Victor Hugo contends that if the standing armies of Europe and her mercenary civil officers were abolished, her people would be endowed with \$2,000,000,000 per annum. From a large portion of this burden we are free. But, unhappily, corrupt politicians have either created among us a host of unnecessary officers to eat out the substance of the people, or they have countenanced exorbitant fees and unnecessary expenses, and they are public enemies scarcely less dangerous and exacting than tyrannical kings and pampered aristocrats. However, the voters have at all times the remedy for manifest evils in their own hands, and when they rise up in their majesty, they can easily sweep the horde of plunderers into oblivion, and obtain here, much more readily than in Europe, the "deliverance which contains the solution of all."

### THE TYRANT LOPEZ.

The statements made by Mr. Charles A. Washburn, when he held the post of United States Minister to Paraguay, as to the infamous cruelties practised by Lopez, were not only denied by that tyrant, but he retorted by accusing Mr. Washburn, and Messrs. Masterman and Bliss, with having been engaged in a conspiracy against him, and, moreover, managed to have his accusation credited. Mr. Washburn was unable to obtain the services of the United States fleet in the South Pacific waters when he demanded them, and Rear-Admiral Davis disbelieved, or affected to disbelieve, his reports, and did not offer to go to his assistance until some months after the call was made upon him. A letter, apparently written by an officer of the navy familiar with all the facts, and published some time ago in one of the New York papers, among other extraordinary statements of like character, gives as a reason for Admiral Davis' non-action in this case, that it was beneath the dignity of a Rear-Admiral in the United States navy to be at the beck and call of a Minister, or any civilian whatever. Not only did not our fleet go to the assistance of the Minister when it was called for, but the whole conduct of Davis, and the treatment which Messrs. Masterman and Bliss received on board of the United States vessel which carried them away from Paraguay, indicated that the story told by Lopez was credited rather than the statement made by Minister Washburn and others, who had suffered from his cruelty. The conduct of Rear-Admiral Davis in this affair has never yet been investigated, as it should be, and we hope sincerely that if the Secretary of the Navy does not move in the matter, that Congress will order an inquiry that will sift it to the bottom.

In the meantime Mr. Washburn, who is now in London, has written a letter to the *Morning Star* in answer to a statement to the effect that he had long since retracted his accusations against President Lopez. Mr. Washburn denies in the most explicit manner that he has made any retractions whatever, and he reiterates his accusations, and

presents a list of the crimes perpetrated by the tyrant. Mr. Washburn states that "Lopez has tortured and shot his Foreign Minister, Jose Bergos, and his own brother, Benigno Lopez. He has shot his Chief Justice, Andres Urdapilleta, also the Bishop of Paraguay, and nearly thirty priests. He has shot his brother-in-law, General Barrios; his other brother-in-law, Saturnino Bedoya, expired under torture. He flogged his sister, the wife of General Barrios, until she was nearly dead, and he forced his mother to make a public declaration that she had no child but the brutal monster who had murdered one or more and tortured with inhuman cruelty her other children." Mr. Washburn says that the apologists of Lopez do not pretend to deny these specific statements, or the slaughter, eighteen months ago, of nearly five hundred foreigners, but only allege in general terms that they are exaggerated; and, further, that "the few English and other foreigners yet alive in Paraguay are permitted to live by Lopez because they are useful to him. But if one of them shall escape to confirm and add to what I and others have said of his cruelties and crimes, they may, like those who have already escaped, thank the fortune of war, and not the protecting shields of their own governments."

There is no good reason to doubt the word of Mr. Washburn in this matter, and the most singular part of the affair is that Lopez should have found so many eager apologists who undertake to deny the statements of witnesses who are entitled to be believed in every civilized country, in preference to the tyrant of Paraguay. The course of Lopez has been strictly in accordance with Paraguayan traditions, and he has shown himself to be a true follower of the infamous Dr. Francia. Such a character will attract a barbarous public to him through mingled fear and admiration far more than a more humane ruler, and this will serve to explain in some measure the desperate character of the resistance he has been able to offer during such a protracted war and while fighting against such apparently overwhelming odds. The valor displayed by Lopez will excite for him a certain amount of respect even in the hearts of his enemies, but his downfall will be a blessing to South America and the world. The exclusion of foreigners from Paraguayan territory at all hazards has been the leading idea of the rulers of that country, and it has been one of the means by which they have perpetuated their power. This would be sufficient of itself to substantiate the assertions of Mr. Washburn and others, and there cannot be any doubt whatever that these accusations are true to the letter. The action of our Government—or its proper representatives—in the matter of Mr. Washburn's release, was not creditable, and although Rear-Admiral Davis may have sustained his own "dignity," he certainly diminished the respect, not only of Paraguay, but of all the South American States, for the flag of the United States.

NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE in the Old World has recently received a striking illustration. The London *Times* complains that the American press has been led into an error as to the manner in which the news of the result of the recent international boat race on the Thames reached the telegraph station. It was asserted that a messenger carried the despatch on horseback from the river to the nearest office. But it turns out that no horse was used on the occasion, and that "Electric Jack," a fleet-footed Britisher, rushed through the streets with the despatch in his pocket. If an event of such widespread interest had transpired in this country, a special telegraph wire would have been stretched to the river bank, and the instant the race was terminated the result would have sped, on the wings of the lightning, all over the world! We are in the habit of doing some things differently from our cousins.

CHARLES DICKENS, at a recent meeting in Birmingham, England, defined his political creed as follows:—"His faith in the people governing was infinitesimal; his faith in people governed was illimitable." He evidently reposes little confidence in the politicians or statesmen of either party. In one of his novels he ridicules very effectively the prevailing English system which confines the choice of prime ministers to a very small coterie of men, and nominally makes the destiny of the whole nation hinge on the conflicting opinions of Lord Noodle or Lord Doodle. In the patriotism and wisdom of the people, however, the great novelist has illimitable faith; and if he was thoroughly familiar with the details of American politics, this faith would, if possible, be strengthened, for it is the people, after all, who purify and elevate the tone of public affairs, and dictate nearly all the wholesome measures that are adopted.

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